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Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In May 2012, the General Assembly adopted resolution 66/261 on interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). A total of 86 Member States signed on as formal sponsors of this consensus resolution, which for the first time addressed the role of parliaments at the United Nations as a stand-alone item, thus signalling a new beginning to this evolving partnership.

The relationship between the United Nations — the premier multilateral organization — and the IPU — the world organization of parliaments — has been building steadily since the late 1990s. It has been reinforced through major political statements, such as the Millennium Declaration, the United Nations Summit Outcome Documents of 2005 and 2010, the Final Declaration of each of the three World Conferences of Speakers of Parliament, as well as various General Assembly resolutions. As the international community is contending with several complex challenges simultaneously, and with important deadlines in 2015 looming on the horizon, it is more important than ever for IPU and national parliaments at large to be involved in the work of the United Nations.

The present report documents the past two years of interaction between the two organizations and the world of parliaments as a whole. It also identifies ways for the two organizations to better work together within the context of institutional reforms and a changing landscape in all policy areas. The first part of the report highlights the main modalities of interaction, providing concrete examples of the results achieved at the political and operational levels. The annex to the report provides a more detailed list of activities carried out during this period to more clearly illustrate the day-to-day interaction between the two organizations.

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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations is the cornerstone of multilateralism, bringing together Member States to work for the promotion of peace, human rights and development, based on the inherent right of everyone to live a life free of fear and want. With the advent of globalization, growing interdependence among States and, more recently, threats such as climate change, this mission has become more challenging than ever. It is clear today that it is only by involving other actors, in addition to governments proper, that the United Nations can hope to achieve its goals.

2. National parliaments constitute one such actor. They are the primary link between the Governments assembled at the United Nations and the people they are elected to represent on a daily basis with respect to all issues of peace and security, sustainable development, democracy, gender equality and human rights. It is for parliaments to pass the legislation that will give effect to international commitments in each country, or to adopt the national budget that will allow the same commitments to be implemented. It is also the duty of parliaments to hold Governments to account for their pledges to the international community and to their own citizens.

3. With a membership of 164 national parliaments and with institutional ties to all the major regional and geopolitical parliamentary assemblies in the world, IPU is the only parliamentary organization with a global reach. As such, and as a Permanent Observer to the United Nations, it is well positioned to channel the views of parliaments and their members directly into all major United Nations deliberative processes. IPU is also a key vehicle for supporting the implementation of global commitments at the country level both by strengthening the capacities of parliaments to carry out their legislative, oversight and representative roles and by providing them with relevant information about United Nations operations and decision-making processes.

4. As illustrated in this report, IPU mobilizes parliaments at the national level in order to promote greater transparency, accountability and participation at the global level. This goes a long way to establishing a more democratic international order.

II. Political interaction at the Inter-Parliamentary Union between parliaments and the United Nations

5. As in the past, biannual IPU assemblies during this period have continued to provide opportunities for senior United Nations officials to interact with parliamentarians and share their views on virtually all issues on the global agenda, from sustainable development to disarmament, conflict resolution to democratic governance, and human rights to gender equality. The Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, heads of United Nations agencies, Funds and Programmes, and United Nations High Representatives have engaged with parliamentarians through IPU, raising awareness and building political support for major processes under way at the United Nations. This regular interaction between high-level United Nations officials and over 600 parliamentarians at each IPU Assembly also helps the United Nations promote its own positions and initiatives. Examples of high-level United Nations engagement at IPU assemblies include:

- 126th IPU Assembly (April 2012): open debate with the Executive Directors of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- 127th IPU Assembly (October 2012): interaction with the Chair of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, and the Director of the United Nations Millennium Campaign
- 128th IPU Assembly (March 2013): keynote addresses by the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Innovative Financing for Development
- 129th IPU Assembly (October 2013): thematic discussions with the United Nations High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), the Chair of the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, and the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Disarmament. Open debates were also held in plenary meeting with both the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

6. Through the adoption of formal resolutions,[1] the IPU assemblies continue to provide the setting for parliamentarians to develop a common position on key issues on the United Nations agenda. They have included global issues, such as nuclear disarmament, the elimination of chemical weapons, and responsibility to protect, as well as specific conflict situations, such as in Mali and the Syrian Arab Republic, (particularly their humanitarian consequences). Development-related resolutions have addressed natural disasters, trade and financing for development, and the rights of children. Another set of resolutions provided further guidance on emerging questions for democracy, such as the role of social media in enhancing citizen engagement and how to strengthen citizenship in ethnically or linguistically diverse societies. A common thread of these texts is that they have drawn on the agreed international framework to identify the specific legislative reforms that parliaments need to undertake. The resolutions of each IPU Assembly have been circulated to the members of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies under the relevant agenda items. The actual political impact of this well-established practice, which among the constellations of Observer entities remains unique to IPU, may well be a matter of further assessment.

7. An important structure specifically designed to enhance the partnership between the United Nations and IPU, to review parliamentary action on implementation of international commitments and to help shape parliamentary input to major United Nations processes is the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs. The Committee meets regularly in plenary format, bringing together representatives from all IPU member Parliaments. It serves as a platform for interaction between members of parliament and senior United Nations officials and examines implementation of major United Nations commitments. The Committee's

[1] IPU resolutions are available online from www.ipu.org/strct-e/stcnfres.htm.

annual sessions have been devoted to a number of topical issues: how democracy is addressed by the United Nations, the role of parliamentary diplomacy in multilateralism, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, and the status of cooperation between United Nations country teams and parliaments in the elaboration of national development strategies. As an improvement on its working methods, the Committee now meets twice a year during the IPU Assemblies and is equipped with an 18-member Bureau which guides the work of the Committee, establishes its workplan and conducts field missions and other operational activities. I note with satisfaction that the Committee has been retooled and reconfigured to better fulfil its mandate.

8. Work has commenced on preparations for a Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in 2015, which, as on past occasions (2000, 2005 and 2010) will be organized in close cooperation with the United Nations. It is expected that this fourth conference will conclude with a major Declaration outlining the vision for inter-parliamentary cooperation in the post-2015 era while also providing further guidance on the future relationship between the United Nations, parliaments and IPU.

III. Integrating the concerns of parliaments into major United Nations processes

9. In its resolution 65/123, the General Assembly specifically encouraged the United Nations to engage more systematically with IPU in integrating a parliamentary component of and contribution to major United Nations deliberative processes and the review of international commitments. Partly in response to this, IPU developed a five-year Strategy (2012 to 2017) that specifically includes as an objective developing a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations and other multilateral institutions. Another objective of the IPU strategy is to build parliamentary support for international development goals. The parliamentary contribution to the post-2015 development agenda includes the following:

(a) A pivotal United Nations process in which IPU has been particularly active during the reporting period is the global consultation for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. IPU spared no effort in ensuring that, unlike the Millennium Development Goals, the future Sustainable Development Goals will receive and reflect parliamentary input and thus be anchored in stronger national ownership. To this end, IPU facilitated a parliamentary round table at the Monrovia meeting of the former High-level Panel of Eminent Persons in January 2013, and contributed to a second parliamentary consultation at the Bali meeting of the High-level Panel later the same year.

(b) Another comprehensive contribution was made at the 128th IPU Assembly in Quito, in March 2013, where the plenary debate was dedicated to the vision of post-2015 development under the theme "From unrelenting growth to purposeful development 'Buen Vivir': New approaches, new solutions". The formal outcome of this debate, known as the Quito Communiqué, focused attention on two key issues: the need for a new economic model of sustainable development directly focused on human well-being, and the need for stronger democratic governance as both a means and an end to sustainable development.

(c) Later in 2013, the joint United Nations-IPU Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations took up these themes again to bring them closer to the attention of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. The Hearing also included a discussion on gender in the Sustainable Development Goals, concluding that a stand-alone goal on gender was necessary in addition to gender mainstreaming. While it is too soon to assess the extent to which this parliamentary perspective has succeeded in informing the final outcome of the Open Working Group, key messages have already been reflected in other United Nations reports, such as the report of the 2013 Dialogue on Harmony with Nature and the report of the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order (twenty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council, July 2013).

10. The multi-stakeholder Development Cooperation Forum, where parliamentarians participate alongside government representatives, civil society, local authorities and a number of other development cooperation practitioners, continued to provide an important setting for the perspective of parliaments to be heard at the United Nations. With the agenda for development cooperation now encompassing a large array of "beyond aid" issues, including domestic resources, private flows (including remittance, foreign direct investment (FDI), etc.) as well as several other sources of development finance, parliamentarians are expected to play an even more important role in supporting legal reforms and enhancing accountability across the board. These same issues are at the core of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, supported by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in which IPU is also engaged as a member of its Steering Committee. The particular modality of the Development Cooperation Forum, in which stakeholder groups participate on equal terms and contribute their thoughts and experiences on the issues, has made a significant difference in helping to shape a new discourse of development cooperation within the Development Cooperation Forum and beyond. This successful practice could be considered in other open United Nations forums, beginning with the new High-level Political Forum on sustainable development, which, inter alia, will serve as a focal point for the implementation and monitoring of the new Sustainable Development Goals.

11. Also pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/123, two additional joint IPU-United Nations annual Parliamentary Hearings were organized during this period.[2] The 2013 Hearing was co-sponsored for the first time by both the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Economic and Social Council. Each Hearing brought to New York close to 200 parliamentarians for an interactive exchange with permanent representatives and senior United Nations officials. As mentioned above, the 2013 event was closely linked to the post-2015 process. The 2012 edition of the Hearing, entitled "A road less travelled: Parliamentary approaches to conflict prevention, reconciliation and peacebuilding", helped to highlight how parliaments can play a role, in partnership with the United Nations, in helping to restore political stability to countries that are prone to or emerging from conflict. For example, in situations of peacebuilding and national reconciliation, while the first interlocutor of the United Nations must necessarily be the Government, its work can also benefit from engagement with parliament. In cases

[2] A complete overview of the joint Parliamentary Hearings can be found online from www.ipu.org/un-e/un-hearings.htm.

where parliamentarians have established close relations with their constituents, parliaments are well equipped to monitor lingering and rising tensions in society before violence even erupts. Moreover, the eruption of violence may be prevented by allowing societal tensions to turn into parliamentary debates.[3] Several recommendations from this meeting are directly relevant to the work of the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and indeed the Peacebuilding Commission, among other United Nations bodies. The summary reports from both Hearings were circulated in the General Assembly and among national parliaments.

12. Significant political endorsements of the role of parliament in advancing major United Nations commitments were imbedded directly into key outcome documents. Paragraphs 42 and 43 of The future we want — the Outcome Document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development — make it clear that parliaments (legislative bodies) have a key role in promoting sustainable development. Likewise, in paragraph 34 of the Declaration of the September 2012 High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law at the National and International Level, the Heads of State and Government "recognize the essential role of parliaments in the rule of law at the national level, and welcome the interaction among the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". The September 2013 outcome document of the Special Event of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 agenda expressly welcomes the contribution of parliaments to that major process.

13. In view of the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, which will share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples, including to pursue the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, IPU has worked to bring the voices of parliamentarians and indigenous communities to the process. This work is part of the IPU broader agenda to support the fair representation of minorities in decision-making. It included consultations with parliamentarians at the 128th IPU Assembly and a global parliamentary meeting in Bolivia in April this year. IPU also participated in the session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2013. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/296 (modalities resolution), parliamentarians will be included in the multi-stakeholder hearing to be held at the forthcoming session of the Forum in May of this year. Lastly, a Handbook for Parliamentarians on the Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples has been jointly produced by IPU, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNDP, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The Handbook is expected to be published this year.

14. To help harness political will for a new multilateral trade agreement under the Doha Round, IPU and the European Parliament have pursued their strategy of bringing parliamentarians closer to the negotiating process through the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization. This involved a number of parliamentary meetings in Geneva and a major gathering at the ninth Ministerial Conference of WTO held in Bali in December 2013. A large parliamentary meeting

[3] More illustrations of how parliaments can play a role in peacebuilding and national reconciliation alongside the United Nations is available from www.ipu.org/splz-e/unga12/summary.pdf.

was also held at WTO in Geneva in November 2012 entitled "Back to Basics: Connecting Politics and Trade", with a hearing for parliamentarians with the WTO Director General.

IV. Parliamentary oversight of international commitments

15. International commitments are of little value unless they are fully implemented at the national level through legislation, budget allocations and parliamentary oversight. Indeed, parliaments have a wide range of tools at their disposal to ensure that national laws, policies, regulations, programmes and budgets reflect the principles and obligations contained in all international agreements.

Parliamentary participation in national reporting exercises

16. In keeping with established practice, IPU continued to link parliaments to the national reporting exercise on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women at the regular sessions of the Committee on the Convention. IPU alerts concerned parliaments of the report that is to be submitted to the Committee by their Government, invites members of parliament to join their government delegation to the relevant session of the Committee, and subsequently transmits to the parliament, for information and further follow-up, the outcome of the Committee's deliberations. This well-tested practice was the inspiration for Human Rights Council resolution 22/15, in which the Council called for a more in-depth panel discussion on the contribution of parliaments to the work of the Council and its universal periodic review. The recommendations of that panel include: involving parliaments in a comprehensive national consultation process to prepare the national report to the Council; including members of parliament in the official delegations to the Council (in an observer capacity or otherwise), and providing for an official presentation of the universal periodic review recommendations to each concerned parliament. Other recommendations of the panel call for enhancing the capacity of parliaments to contribute to the work of the Human Rights Council, strengthening cooperation between parliaments and national human rights stakeholders, and strengthening cooperation between the Council and IPU. In follow-up to these recommendations, a parliamentary meeting for the Central and Eastern Europe region was held in Bucharest, in February 2014. Other regional meetings are scheduled to take place this year in Morocco (Arab region) and Uruguay (Latin America and the Caribbean region).

17. With respect to implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, IPU was one partner, along with UNDP and the Millennium Campaign, in the organization of regional meetings on Millennium Development Goals acceleration. With a three-year time frame (from the start of this reporting period) in the run-up to 2015, IPU helped to drive home to parliaments the urgent need for policies to more directly target those Millennium Development Goals in which their countries were most lagging behind. One meeting was held in the African region and two more in the Asia-Pacific region. A briefing for parliamentarians on Millennium Development Goal acceleration was also held at the 127th IPU Assembly in October 2012.

18. At the same time, IPU continued to focus attention on the need for parliaments to review their own committee structures in order to assess the usefulness of

forming a specialized Millennium Development Goal committee or caucus to improve oversight of government policy and facilitate internal coordination between portfolio committees. A study conducted by IPU in May/June 2012 of the Millennium Development Goals Committee of the Nigerian Parliament, for example, shows both the inherent risks and potential of such a structure, especially if it is not fully integrated into the budget-making process or the national development planning exercise. In many countries where parliaments lack the capacity to effectively monitor and implement the international development goals, the United Nations country team could help facilitate the involvement of the parliament in national review exercises and generally facilitate information sharing and the provision of targeted technical assistance.

19. In addition to promoting implementation of the Millennium Development Goals as a whole, IPU has also worked in cooperation with United Nations entities to zero in on specific Millennium Development Goals, such as those on women's empowerment (Millennium Development Goal 3), reducing child mortality (Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5), and combating HIV/AIDS (Millennium Development Goal 6). As documented in the annex to the present report, a number of workshops and other events for parliamentarians, in addition to joint publications produced, were held during this period in cooperation with UN-Women, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the World Health Organization (WHO), and UNFPA, among others.[4] Joint action in support of Millennium Development Goal 6, in line with the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, focused in particular on eliminating discriminatory clauses disadvantaging the most-affected populations, which has long been recognized as a key impediment to an effective response to the epidemic.

20. In support of the international commitments on gender equality, many of which have continued to be unrealized since the Fourth World Conference on Women of 1995, IPU continued to hold a day-long parliamentary meeting at the annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women in collaboration with UN-Women as a way of keeping those commitments high on the parliamentary agendas. IPU also continues to supply the United Nations with data on women in politics, which is required to track progress on a key indicator of Millennium Development Goal 3 (the percentage of women in parliaments). The same data provides the basis for a regular joint IPU-UN-Women publication, in the form of a global map of Women in Politics, which provides a snapshot of women politicians in each country. The latest edition of the map was launched at the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2014.[5]

21. Through IPU Assemblies and the work of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs, parliamentarians were better exposed to major United Nations instruments in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation, in particular the new Arms Trade Treaty and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It was agreed that IPU and the United Nations would engage in identifying modalities to continue this work, including through workshops and more focused sessions at the regional level. A Handbook for Parliamentarians on Supporting Nuclear Non-Proliferation and

[4] A complete list of joint publications is available from www.ipu.org/english/handbks.htm.

[5] The Women in Politics map is available from www.ipu.org/english/surveys.htm#MAP2014.

Disarmament, produced by IPU and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament in 2012, has been translated into several languages, and is a particularly useful tool for mobilizing parliamentary action in this crucial area.

V. Parliaments and the United Nations at the national level

22. In paragraph 11 of its resolution 66/261, the General Assembly specifically "calls upon United Nations country teams to develop a more structured and integrated manner of working with national parliaments, inter alia, by involving parliaments in consultations on national development strategies and on development aid effectiveness". The recommendation was inspired by the earlier findings of the Advisory Group of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs based on its field missions aimed at examining implementation of One UN reform and system-wide coherence at the national level. The overarching idea was that parliaments can do much to contribute to United Nations processes directly at the country level and in areas extending well beyond development per se to include peacebuilding, humanitarian crises and electoral reforms. In moving towards the post-2015 era, strengthening the links between the United Nations field presence and the national parliaments could go a long way in facilitating implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals and other commitments.

23. Building on earlier field missions to the United Republic of Tanzania (2008), Viet Nam (2009), Ghana and Sierra Leone (May 2011), in September 2012, the IPU Advisory Group also examined closely the Delivering as One operation in Albania and Montenegro. Based on these visits, which were closely coordinated with United Nations officials on the ground and the national parliament, it emerged that various parts of the United Nations system in the country were involved in facilitating support to the parliament so that it could better work on implementation of global commitments. In Albania, for example, UNDP-parliament interaction supported the establishment of a Parliamentary Committee on Population and Development, the creation of a Child Rights Parliamentarian Caucus, support for the Health Committee and Social Affairs Committee on HIV/AIDS-related issues, support for women members of parliament, capacity-development initiatives with administrative parliamentary structures, preparation for the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and advocacy work with the Speaker of Parliament on women's empowerment and the fight against gender-based violence. In addition to the technical assistance provided to parliament in both countries, it was recommended that the United Nations country teams also develop a more structured practice of engaging parliaments in both the elaboration and monitoring of the national development strategies.

24. A second field mission of the Advisory Group was conducted in June 2013 in Côte d'Ivoire. Testing some of the recommendations of the United Nations-IPU Parliamentary Hearing in 2012, the mission sought to enhance interaction between the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations country team and the national parliament in peacebuilding efforts. While recognizing the crucial role parliaments are called upon to play in peacebuilding and national reconciliation, the mission also highlighted the very real need to bolster the capacities of parliament. This should allow the parliament to implement the necessary political, legislative and institutional reforms as the country transitions from conflict to sustainable peace and development. UNDP is already implementing a substantive programme in

support of the parliament in Côte d'Ivoire. IPU, too, has carried out an organizational audit of parliament and will be looking to partner with UNDP in the implementation of its recommendations. In turn, having expressed its keen interest to play an active role in conflict prevention, the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire hosted, in October 2013, a regional parliamentary conference on the role of parliament in conflict prevention and management in West Africa. The conference concluded with a series of specific recommendations for parliamentary action with a view to enhancing the rule of law, putting in place human rights legislation in keeping with related international norms, ensuring democratic and peaceful alternation of power, and promoting dialogue and inclusiveness to engage the reforms required by the national reconciliation process.

25. A third mission of the Advisory Group on United Nations Affairs took place in Haiti in February 2014 to examine the overall effectiveness of the United Nations system humanitarian and reconstruction efforts following the 2010 earthquake, as well as how United Nations partners on the ground involve parliament, in their respective roles, in the elaboration and implementation of major national development plans. The findings of the mission were presented to the IPU member Parliaments and will be circulated in the General Assembly.

26. While all these missions demonstrate ever-increasing interaction between United Nations country teams and parliaments at the country level, they also provide evidence of institutional gaps that need to be filled, particularly in terms of working with parliaments not only as the recipients of international assistance, but also as major partners in the design and monitoring of key national strategies.

27. During a review of these issues at the 129th IPU Assembly, in October 2013, the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs drew up a list of specific recommendations in order to promote coherent interaction between parliaments and United Nations country teams. These include: securing a regular flow of information and consultations at the strategy and policy-planning level, and facilitating regular interaction on national development plans and national reviews of major global commitments. The elaboration of guidelines based on good practices from the field is also an area worth exploring.

28. Underlying all these issues is the larger question of capacity-building for parliaments to engage with the United Nations at both the national and global levels and also, and most critically, to effectively fulfil their unique legislative and oversight roles. UNDP implements parliamentary capacity-building programmes in some 70 countries. IPU is working, especially with UNDP, with at least six United Nations country offices, assisting to implement parliamentary technical assistance programming in Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Myanmar, Pakistan and the State of Palestine.

29. Much more needs to be done and more resources for this work will need to be mobilized, working with all development partners in collaboration with national parliaments. With regard to IPU-UNDP collaboration in Myanmar, the new approach is described below.

(a) Recent years have seen more robust efforts by IPU and UNDP to provide assistance to parliaments in a more efficient and effective manner. This new approach has worked well in Myanmar. The two organizations undertook joint

missions throughout 2012, including one in July 2012 to design a long-term programme of broad support to the Union Assembly for 2013-2015.

(b) Pending development and approval of the 2013-2015 programme and the amendment of the UNDP mandate in Myanmar, and in response to the Union Assembly request for immediate support, IPU began providing initial support for the establishment of a Library, Research and Information Service in December 2012. UNDP Myanmar extended valuable administrative support to the IPU project under very challenging circumstances.

(c) The 2013-2015 programme was approved in April 2013 by the parliament and the programme has been included in the UNDP Country Programme Action Plan for 2013-2015. IPU and UNDP have now signed a Letter of Agreement on the implementation of the programme. Specifically, the two organizations will work towards enhancing the capacity of the Union Assembly Secretariat so that it can service the Union Assembly, its committees and members of parliament effectively and in a gender-responsive manner.

(d) From the outset, the IPU project was designed within the framework of the broader 2013-2015 programme and since January 2014, has been fully integrated into it. This new approach has facilitated concrete and valued support to the nascent parliament from an early stage.

(e) Since early in 2012, IPU and UNDP have participated in various coordination initiatives, including donor groups, and have regularly liaised with other organizations planning support for the Union Assembly. This has helped to reduce the scope for duplication and overlap. By the same token, various organizations have been encouraged to work with the Library, Research and Information Service as the depository of all resources/materials being used for parliamentary capacity-development and training activities.

30. Another excellent illustration of how IPU and the United Nations can work together to engage parliaments at the national level in global processes was provided in the second half of 2013 when, in coordination with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, the Landlocked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States and the active support of the Democratic Governance Group in the Bureau for Development Policy of UNDP, focus groups were held with parliamentarians in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone and Samoa. The focus groups solicited the input of parliamentarians on how their parliaments had managed to mainstream the 2011 Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, what difficulties they had encountered, and what kind of support they expected from the United Nations system in the field. The main thrust was that the United Nations needs to aid the establishment of strong implementation mechanisms at the national level that include the active participation of parliaments. Specific recommendations included: setting up working groups that collaborate with parliament on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme; establishing a United Nations focal point for the implementation of the Programme that would link up to a corresponding parliamentary focal point; providing assistance to parliaments in order to enhance their capacity to conduct qualitative assessments of expenditures and policies; organizing multi-stakeholder discussions that include members of parliament; and providing the necessary funding and information to parliaments to enable them to fulfil their oversight role. The extent to which these recommendations will be implemented will likely have an

impact on the overall ability of parliaments to contribute to the national midterm reviews scheduled for 2016.

VI. Recommendations

31. Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and IPU ranges from the political to the operational and touches on virtually all policy areas. The modalities of the interaction have evolved to include several innovative approaches which could be further expanded. Like the United Nations, IPU is retooling itself to better serve its own members, while also enhancing its capacities to function as a parliamentary interface with the United Nations.

32. **Given the growing number and complexity of issues on the international agenda, as well as the resource constraints that both IPU and the United Nations are facing, greater complementarities and synergies will need to be achieved between the two organizations in order to maximize the overall impact both politically and operationally. The following seven elements are recommended:**

(a) **The experience of the annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, as a joint United Nations-IPU event designed to inform major United Nations processes from a parliamentary perspective, could be expanded to other parliamentary meetings convened in conjunction with major United Nations conferences and processes. The outcome of such meetings could serve as a formal parliamentary contribution to the respective United Nations deliberations. This could be the case, for example, of the parliamentary meeting organized on the occasion of the annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and other such meetings organized jointly by IPU and the United Nations, which could be included as part of the formal United Nations agenda.**

(b) **Given that the main issues taken up by the United Nations and IPU often intersect, mechanisms could be developed to ensure better coordination between the political agendas of the two organizations. As a first step in this direction, more regular and structured interaction could be established between the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs and the relevant bodies of the United Nations. Closer consultation between the United Nations and IPU could also help to set the agenda of the Committee so that it addresses actionable issues of common interest.**

(c) **Parliaments are essential to ensure the implementation of major international agreements. The United Nations and IPU should therefore work closely to incorporate a clear role for parliaments at the global level and jointly support country-led efforts that need to accompany the post-2015 sustainable development goals.**

(d) **Similarly, acknowledging the positive outcomes of the previous World Conferences of Speakers of Parliament, held at the United Nations ahead of the Millennium Summit and the United Nations Summits in 2005 and 2010, it is proposed that the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, as part of the series of high-level meetings in September 2015 devoted to world peace and development.**

(e) As the role of national parliaments is key in translating global commitments into national policies and frameworks, the United Nations and IPU should enhance their joint efforts to further strengthen the capacities of parliaments to perform their legislative, oversight and representative functions. This will also enable parliaments to be more actively involved in national development planning exercises and reviews of global commitments. The United Nations country teams, in particular, should avail themselves more systematically of the unique expertise of IPU and its member Parliaments in strengthening parliamentary institutions, particularly in countries emerging from conflict and/or in transition to democracy.

(f) Building on the experience of the parliamentary involvement in the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, a more robust parliamentary contribution could be brought to the Human Rights Council universal periodic review, as recommended by the May 2013 panel. Indeed, this practice could also usefully be applied to the national reports that will be submitted to other United Nations bodies, such as the new High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

(g) In the light of the growing partnership between the United Nations and IPU, which strives to provide the parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations, the General Assembly may wish to further explore the modalities and benefits of this interaction, and continue to include this subject as a separate item in the agenda of its seventieth session.

Annex

List of joint activities conducted by the United Nations, national parliaments and IPU since April 2012

I. Democracy and human rights

- IPU actively promoted the United Nations-sanctioned International Day of Democracy, on 15 September, by requesting member Parliaments to mark the Day through a special activity or political statement. The main theme of the Day in 2013, agreed in cooperation with IPU, was Strengthening Voices for Democracy. About 30 parliaments took steps each year to help mark the Day. The Director of the Europe Division participated in a session of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs at the 127th IPU Assembly in Quebec, Canada, entitled "Does the United Nations take democracy seriously enough?" The session touched on a number of areas in which the United Nations and IPU work together, in particular the rule of law, integrity of elections and the promotion of greater transparency in the work of parliaments.

- Democracy cannot exist without the rule of law. In conjunction with the September 2012 High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law, a parliamentary meeting was held at the United Nations under the joint sponsorship of the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations, IPU and the international Development Law Organization. The meeting served to reflect on the Declaration of the High-level Meeting, particularly as it contained a strong acknowledgement of the role of parliaments in strengthening the rule of law at the national level.

- Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 22/15 adopted in 2013, IPU co-organized a panel on the contribution of parliaments to the work of the Human Rights Council and its universal periodic review during the Council's May session. In cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, IPU is also updating the Human Rights Handbook for Parliamentarians. In the same vein, IPU is finalizing a handbook on migration from a human rights perspective.

- IPU also participated in a panel discussion organized by OHCHR on accountability for implementation of the future post-2015 development agenda from a human rights perspective. The event took place in New York on 22 May 2013. The panel discussed inter alia how international human rights commitments can be translated into enforceable legislation at the national level. Another IPU contribution to United Nations debates on human rights was made at the tenth session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, held in October 2012 in Geneva.

- Together with the UNDP Democratic Governance Group in the Bureau for Development Policy, IPU worked in the first quarter of 2013 on a survey of parliamentarians on key questions related to governance and sustainable development. UNDP assisted with preparations for a workshop on democratic governance held at the 128th IPU Assembly in Quito, in March 2013. The Group support to IPU included input to an event entitled "Measuring

democratic Governance: The art of the possible" in February 2014. The event was jointly organized by IPU and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), and was sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Mongolia to the United Nations. It provided a direct contribution to the session of the Open Working Group that same week, when governance was on the agenda.

- In April 2012, the first ever Global Parliamentary Report was published as a joint IPU-UNDP endeavour. The report provides an in-depth analysis of the state of the world's parliaments and how they can be strengthened further in order to provide a more solid foundation to democratic practices and principles in their respective countries. In June 2013, in Rabat, IPU and UNDP, together with the Parliament of Morocco, organized a regional workshop on how to strengthen the relationship between parliament and citizens following the political and institutional upheaval of the Arab Spring. The report has seen follow-up action in 14 parliaments and currently exists in eight languages.

- IPU continued to work closely with UNDP country offices, providing technical assistance and capacity-building programmes to national parliaments. In the past two years, IPU has signed and/or extended agreements with four UNDP country offices to provide support to parliamentary strengthening projects and has contributed to over 40 activities in Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Pakistan, the State of Palestine, Palau and Samoa. This included a joint IPU-UNDP project formulation mission to Myanmar in July 2012, which has since led to a full-scale project of support for the parliament. United Nations Resident Coordinators worked closely with IPU to facilitate parliamentary field missions to Albania, Montenegro, Côte d'Ivoire and Haiti. As part of a working group of parliamentary practitioners, UNDP and IPU began work on a set of Common Principles for Parliamentary Development Practitioners. Once finalized, the principles should serve as a reference for parliamentary development, helping to ensure that s pport to parliaments is sustainable and driven by parliaments' own definition of their development needs.

- The fifth World e-Parliament Conference was held in Rome in September 2012, in cooperation with the United Nations Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, IPU, and the Italian Chamber of Deputies. The conference focused on "open parliament", i.e., how technologies can further support transparency and accountability to citizens. The joint *World Global e-Parliament Report 2012* was also launched at the Conference.

- The rights of indigenous peoples are a significant feature of the democracy and human rights agenda. A Handbook for parliamentarians on *The Rights of Indigenous Peoples* was produced by OHCHR, UNDP, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and IPU. The launch of the Handbook is planned for September 2014. IPU provided input to the May 2013 session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, where plans for a parliamentary contribution to this year's World Conference on Indigenous Peoples were outlined. The outcome of the Forum explicitly welcomed such a contribution, including through a multi-stakeholder hearing (indigenous

peoples, civil society and parliaments, among others) to be held in conjunction with the 2014 session of the Forum in May of this year.

II. Gender equality

- The IPU Secretary General met with the new Executive Director of UN-Women, P. Mlambo-Ngcuka, for an exchange of views on future prospects for enhanced cooperation between the two organizations. They discussed, inter alia, the possibility of signing a memorandum of understanding.

- IPU and the UN-Women Subregional Office for Central and Southeastern Europe signed a memorandum of understanding in July 2012, aimed at promoting gender equality in Turkey. As part of the agreement, the two organizations worked together on implementing the United Nations joint programme entitled Fostering an Enabling Environment for Gender Equality in Turkey, in particular in terms of lending technical support to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and its Commission on Equal Opportunities. In this framework, a gender self-assessment was organized in December 2012. The assessment helped the Commission to take stock of its impact on gender-related legislation, appraise the role it was playing in parliament and identify capacity-building needs.

- Senior UN-Women officials engaged with the eighth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament, organized by IPU in November 2013 immediately before the joint IPU-United Nations Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations. The meeting looked closely at the gender aspects of the agenda of the Hearing, on the new Sustainable Development Goals, and whether a stand-alone gender goal should be formulated.

- In cooperation with UN-Women, IPU held its annual Parliamentary Meeting at the 2013 and 2014 sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, respectively on parliamentary strategies for tackling violence against women and girls, and on Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls. The day-long meetings followed the agenda of the main session of the Commission on the Status of Women so as to provide a direct contribution from the parliamentary community.

- UN-Women and IPU pursued their collaboration in the area of ending violence against women and girls. UN-Women country offices provided inputs and expertise for the organization of the IPU Regional seminar for East and Southern African Parliaments on how to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls through effective enforcement of legislation, held in Dar es Salaam (December 2012), as well as in IPU national parliamentary capacity-building workshops on violence against women, held in Burundi (July 2012), Mali (June 2013) and Sierra Leone (March 2014).

- The map of Women in Politics: 2014 was produced as a joint publication of IPU and UN-Women. It was launched on the occasion of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in New York in 2014. The data that IPU collects on the number of women in parliaments continue to feed into all United Nations statistical reports on the matter, including those compiled to track progress on Millennium Development Goal 3.

- A report by UN-Women and the Mary Robinson Foundation issued in May 2013 highlighted the IPU model of how to promote the participation of women in its governing structures and policies as a model for the entire United Nations community.[a] UN-Women also recommended that the IPU example should be studied and possibly replicated in the context of climate change and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process.

- IPU regularly submits information to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the level of parliamentary involvement in the reporting process and on the representation of women in parliament in the States parties to the Convention. The Speaker of Parliament of Uganda represented IPU at an event to mark the Committee's thirtieth anniversary. A meeting took place between members of IPU and the Committee in October 2013 in Geneva to increase cooperation. Two members of that Committee participated as resource persons in a Committee training for parliamentarians organized by IPU in October 2013 in Geneva.

- Collaboration continued on the International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics), created in partnership with UNDP, UN-Women, National Democratic Institute, International IDEA and IPU in 2007. The iKNOW Politics website is frequently presented at both United Nations and IPU annual events including the Commission on the Status of Women and biannual IPU Assemblies, to ensure that targeted audiences (elected women, candidates and women's civil society groups) are aware of, and familiar with, the resource.

III. Sustainable development

- The landmark twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development was held in Rio in June 2012. IPU members were invited to participate in the conference as part of their national delegations. IPU also organized a briefing for parliamentarians on the first day of the Conference to take stock of its Outcome Document.

- Following the Conference on Sustainable Development, IPU began to engage the United Nations-led process to help redefine the current development framework in the light of new challenges and based on the experience of the expiring Millennium Development Goals. As a first step, IPU was the main co-organizer of a parliamentary round table for the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda that met in Monrovia, in January 2013, and where the focus was on democratic governance. A second parliamentary contribution was made to the final consultations of the High-level Panel in Indonesia.

- IPU actively participated in the sessions of the General Assembly Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals, held from September 2013 to February 2014. It included two major contributions to the sessions of the Open Working Group in November 2013 and February 2014 on

[a] The joint report can be found online at www.mrfcj.org/pdf/2013-06-07_The-Full-View.pdf (English only).

macroeconomic issues and governance, respectively. IPU also made a strong conceptual contribution, on the need for a new economic model of sustainable development, to the 2013 Dialogue on Harmony with Nature. That contribution was also highlighted in the final report of the Dialogue.

- The 2013 joint Parliamentary Hearing was held on 14 and 15 November in New York. The event, Rethinking sustainable development: the quest for a transformational global agenda in 2015, was co-organized for the first time with the President of the Economic and Social Council in addition to the President of the General Assembly. It was a major contribution to the post-2015 global consultation that helped to articulate key messages on the economic model of development, democratic governance and gender.

- IPU further discussed possible avenues of cooperation with the Economic and Social Council within the context of that body's ongoing restructuring with stronger multi-stakeholder engagement. Meetings between the IPU Secretary General and the President of the Economic and Social Council took place in New York and Geneva. IPU followed closely the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in 2013, where it also spoke on issues of gender equality and human rights. F.-X. De Donnea (Member of Parliament from Belgium), joined the panel of a thematic debate on accountability and the new development agenda.

- Following the far-reaching reform of the Economic and Social Council, its President invited the IPU Secretary General to an ambassadorial retreat on 16 and 17 November 2013. The IPU Secretary General delivered a keynote speech at the event, which focused on the accountability role of parliaments to support the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

- As the sole parliamentary partner of the Development Cooperation Forum, and as a member of its Advisory Group, IPU made contributions at every meeting of that body held over the current reporting period, including: the Brisbane symposium on development cooperation and sustainable development (June 2012), the main session of the Development Cooperation Forum, held in New York (July 2012), the Dialogue on gender and development cooperation, held in Vienna (December 2012), the Addis Ababa symposium on the global partnership for development cooperation (June 2013), the Montreux Symposium on the catalytic role of aid (October 2013), and the Berlin Symposium on accountability of development cooperation (March 2014). Represented by close to a dozen parliamentarians at each meeting, IPU helped to bring a critical parliamentary perspective to the conclusions of each of these events.

- Also as a contribution to the Development Cooperation Forum, IPU produced a guidance note on how development partners can work together on a national aid policy as a key enabler of mutual accountability. The note was introduced to the Advisory Group of the Development Cooperation Forum for further consultations. It is hoped that the guidance note will provide a critical new tool for Development Cooperation Forum members as well as stakeholders at the national level to either initiate a new aid policy process or review the existing one. IPU also supported the implementation of the third Development Cooperation Forum global survey on mutual accountability by alerting a

number of parliaments to the process and informing them of how to participate in it.

- IPU represents parliaments on the Steering Committee of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, supported in part by UNDP, where, inter alia, it is helping to monitor implementation of all aid and development aid effectiveness commitments. IPU took the lead in the organization of a parliamentary meeting at the High-level Meeting of the Global Partnership in April of this year in Mexico City. The meeting was organized with the support of the Congress of Mexico.

- A review of the current memorandum of understanding between IPU and UNDP was conducted in late 2012. Representatives of key UNDP Bureaux met with senior IPU management to review all areas of cooperation. The outcome was overwhelmingly positive but also highlighted the need to fine-tune some of the working modalities and extend cooperation to new sectors. Discussions on a revised memorandum of understanding are ongoing.

- To help mobilize parliamentary support for the Millennium Development Goals in their final years while also channelling grass-roots parliamentary input into the post-2015 development agenda, IPU contributed to regional meetings co-organized by the Millennium Campaign and UNDP in Addis Ababa, for the African region (May 2012), and Dhaka and Manila for the Asia region (second half of 2012). The final Declarations of these events fed into the ongoing global process to redefine the post-2015 development agenda. UNDP at both headquarters and in the field is providing support to IPU in the organization of a meeting for the Latin America and the Caribbean region, which will be held in the Senate of Mexico in May 2014.

- As a contribution to ongoing consultations on the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the post-2015 development agenda, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and IPU jointly organized a Parliamentary Meeting at the Fourth Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in May 2013 in Geneva. The session was attended by members of parliaments from 26 countries and four regional parliamentary assemblies. It adopted a number of recommendations regarding governance for disaster risk reduction and secured the commitment of parliamentarians to contribute to the post-2015 Framework.

- With the support of UNDP country representatives, and in cooperation with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, IPU worked to organize a number of focus groups in a select number of parliaments to provide global-level feedback on how parliaments are working to mainstream implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action. The results of the focus groups fed into a session of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs on the follow-up to the Istanbul Programme held on 7 October 2013 in Geneva. The High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Gyan Chandra Acharya, was among the high-level participants in the session. At the initiative of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and in consultation with IPU, a guidance note for United

Nations country representatives and parliamentarians on how they can work together to assist with the implementation and further mainstreaming of the Istanbul Programme of Action was produced early this year.

- IPU and UNDP jointly produced a publication entitled "Effective Laws to End HIV and AIDS: Next Steps for Parliaments". The publication provides examples of legislation from around the world that has been effective in limiting the spread of HIV, and draws lessons from the experiences of the parliamentarians involved. The objective of the study is to illustrate the positive impact that parliaments can have on the response to HIV and inspire greater parliamentary scrutiny of laws that hamper effective HIV interventions, particularly those that criminalize key populations.

- UNAIDS and IPU pursued their close collaboration in the area of HIV/AIDS, particularly within the setting of the IPU Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS and Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. A joint road map on future collaboration was agreed, which defines IPU as a key UNAIDS partner for leveraging parliamentary leadership to support increased access to HIV treatment. UNAIDS will provide funding to IPU to further assist in these efforts. A Parliamentary Meeting at the XIX International AIDS Conference was organized in July 2012, in Washington, D.C., in cooperation with UNAIDS. Entitled "AIDS in 2012: What will it take to stop the epidemic", the meeting brought together some 60 Members of Parliament attending the main event. In May 2013 in South Africa, IPU participated in the Thanda Dialogue on Enhancing AIDS Governance, an informal brainstorming meeting convened jointly by UNAIDS and the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The session sought to identify future directions for the governance of the AIDS response, amplifying voice, strengthening norms of inclusion and non-discrimination and identifying novel forms of accountability.

- The UNFPA Regional Office for East and Southern Africa provided financial, technical and logistical support for a planning meeting to consult with parliamentarians and other actors on an IPU Handbook for Parliamentarians on Women's and Children's Health, published in 2013. The meeting was conducted in Uganda and saw the participation of 25 parliamentarians, who provided much-needed input to the final production stage of the manual. UNFPA and WHO continued to participate in the technical Reference Group of the IPU project on maternal, newborn and child health. For its part, IPU submitted a report to the Secretary-General on progress made by the organization in honouring its commitment to the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health. With support from UNICEF, IPU conducted field missions to take stock of how the rights of children are being protected in the countries that host IPU Assemblies.

- Maternal, newborn and child health was also a subject of cooperation between IPU and WHO. With WHO funding, IPU conducted a multi-country seminar hosted by the Bangladesh Parliament on accountability for women's and children's health (Dhaka, 30-31 July 2013). WHO also contributed to IPU knowledge products, such as the Handbook for Parliamentarians on Sustaining Parliamentary Action to Improve Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, and a study on the scale and impact of child marriage in Africa. It also provided assistance to the Parliament of Kenya in conducting a rapid assessment of the

legislative environment for women's and children's health and supported the Parliament of Uganda in developing an advocacy strategy for women's and children's health. For its part, IPU supported several WHO events to implement the recommendations of the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health. Support included the participation of IPU technical staff and senior management as well as efforts to facilitate the participation of parliamentarians in the meetings. IPU contributed to the first report of the independent Expert Review Group on Accountability for Women's and Children's Health.

- The 2012 session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, a joint IPU-European Parliament initiative, took place at WTO premises in Geneva. Entitled "Back to Basics: Connecting politics and trade", the meeting examined the current trade regime from the perspective of job creation and economic growth. It also featured a hearing with the WTO Director-General. The 2013 session of the Conference took place on the occasion of the 9th WTO Ministerial Conference in Bali, with the House of Representatives of Indonesia providing support. Participants stressed the need for the Bali ministerial meeting to make progress on four key issues, namely, trade facilitation, agriculture, food security and issues of particular concern to the Least Developed Countries.

IV. International peace and security

- At the invitation of the President of the United Nations Open-ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations and as part of the Working Group's May 2013 session, IPU organized a parliamentary panel debate at the United Nations Office at Geneva to help mobilize government action on comprehensive nuclear disarmament negotiations. The parliamentary panel heard several presentations, including one by the President of the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security. It was well-attended by States Members of the United Nations, experts, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.

- The Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) participated in a Workshop on New Tools to promote nuclear disarmament at the 127th IPU Assembly, in Quebec City, on 24 October 2012. The workshop elaborated on the IPU Handbook for Parliamentarians on Supporting Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. A special discussion on the Handbook was held on the occasion of UN Day in October 2013, in which the Executive Director of the CTBTO was represented along with a senior adviser to the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. The CTBTO also provided technical advice to IPU through a consultative process on the draft resolution entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free-world: The contribution of parliaments", which was adopted at the 130th IPU Assembly in March 2014.

- The IPU worked closely with the United Nations Office on Disarmament Affairs and the World Future Council to prepare the 2013 edition of the Future Policy Award in the area of disarmament. The Jury, of which IPU is a member, met to discuss the 25 policies (national and regional) under consideration. The

award ceremony took place on 23 October 2013 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. It helped to highlight good and innovative disarmament policies that can inspire action by other countries.

- IPU began discussions with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), which seeks to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The idea is to engage more closely with parliaments and IPU to facilitate the implementation of the namesake resolution through proactive national legislation and stronger parliamentary oversight. A discussion on the Committee's work and on the overall need for implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) took place during the session of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs held during the 129th Assembly in October 2013.

- The 2012 edition of the joint Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, entitled "A road less travelled: Parliamentary approaches to conflict prevention, reconciliation and peacebuilding", helped to highlight how parliaments can support peace around the world both on their own and in cooperation with the United Nations. Several senior officials and permanent representatives participated along with about 200 members of parliament. The discussion looked into concrete scenarios in which parliament was able to prevent political violence or help to build an environment that is conducive to reconciliation. A separate session delved into the question of Security Council reform.

- In close coordination with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, a mission of the Advisory Group of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs took place in Côte d'Ivoire in June 2013. The mission took the cue from the outcome of the 2012 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations to look further into the modalities of interaction between United Nations field operations and the parliament as both work to support political stability. A third mission was conducted in February this year to explore the United Nations humanitarian and reconstruction efforts in Haiti and the role of parliament.

- A Handbook for parliamentarians was produced by IPU together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 2013. Entitled "Internal Displacement, Responsibility and Action", the guide aims to help parliamentarians put appropriate legislation in place to effectively tackle the scourge of some 28 million internally displaced people as a result of armed conflict and a host of other human rights violations. With support from UNHCR, the IPU Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law conducted a mission to the Syrian Arab Republic to take stock of the refugee crisis and raise the awareness of the parliamentary community at large. As a result, the IPU President launched an appeal to the parliamentary community to support the United Nations Regional Response Plan 5 in support of Syrian refugees and host communities.